Quality of food supplied to soldiers

3104. PROF VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the quality of food supplied to soldiers in their messes is neither wholesome, good, nor in full scale in respect of all the items;

(b) if so, the number of times the grievance was raised by the soldiers and what action was taken thereon; and

(c) the steps taken to improve the quality of food to the soldiers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) No, Sir. All food items supplied to the troops conform to the Army Service Corps specifications, formulated after consultation with health and nutrition experts, food scientists and other concerned experts. Random samples are periodically taken and analysed in the Composite Food Laboratories installed at key locations. The condition of food items during storage is duly monitored by responsible Army officers. The process of cooking is supervised by the House Commander of the unit concerned. Rations are issued as per prescribed scales which are scientifically calculated to fully meet the requirements of the human body to maintain it at the peak of physical strength, stamina, efficiency and health. These scales constitute a balanced mix of protein, carbohydrates, fat, minerals and vitamins which in fact provide for a higher level of nutrition than those recommended by the Indian Council of Medical Research.

(b) Some annonymous/pseudonymous complaints were received in the Army Headquarters which could not be substantiated.

(c) Improvements in the quality of food are a continuous process. Necessary measures are taken from time to time to introduce more variety in the ration scales and standards of cooking and catering.

Diversification in Defence P.S.Us.

3105. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Union Government have taken a decision for diversification of production in all defence public sector undertakings and ordnance factories in a big way including for export purposes;

(b) if so, whether the HAL and BEL have started manufacturing, servicing and overhaul of civilian aircraft and the BEL expanded its role in telecom, medical electronics, etc.;

(c) whether 22 per cent of the sales of ordnance factories in 1993-94, were made to non-defence customers;

(d) if so, to what extent diversification of defence production units has affected the production of arms for the defence forces;

(e) whether before issuing any directives on diversification of defence undertakings, Government have ensured that it should in no way affect the defence production in the country; and

(f) if so, to what extent defence public sector undertakings and ordnance factories have earned more profits in 1993-94 than the corresponding period of previous year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) The defence production units have established certain capacities to manufacture equipment and stores for the armed forces to levels of demand in peace and war. However, peace time demand levels, as also budgetary constraints, result in orders from the armed forces which do not always match the production capacities established. For utilisation of the spareable capacities and skills, after meeting the requirements of defence forces, the defence production

units undertake diversification so as to raise turnover and productivity. Diversification also enhances their exposure to commercial industrial culture. Seeking additional avenues of work in export markets forms a part of the diversification efforts.

(b) HAL has manufactured HS-748 in the past and is presently manufacturing Dornier aircraft. To utilise the spare capacity, HAL has been trying to diversify into (i) maintenance and servicing of civilian aircraft, (ii) subcontract work for airframe and engine components from major aircraft manufacturers, etc. HAL has already started work on civil aircraft maintenance and has obtained orders for subcontract work from foreign buyers.

In the area of telecommunication-sattelite communications and broadcasting BEL have already achieved cosiderable growth. In the medical electronics field BEL is manufacturing X-ray tubes.

(c) The ordnance factories sales to non-defence customers are expected to be 22 per cent of the total sales in 1993-94.

(d) and (e) Diversification has in no way affected the production of arms for the defence forces since only spareable capacity after meeting the defence requirements is utilised for non-defence customers. In fact diversification results in higher overall turnover and lower costs for stores delivered to armed forces and, thus, enhances their supportive role for defence preparedness.

(f) While the precise position will be known only after conclusion of the year, the defence public sector undertakings are expected to maintain in 1993-94 an upward trend in profits. The ordnance factories, being departmental undertaking, are working on 'no profit no loss' basis for their issues to the defence forces. By diversification the overheads are distributed over a larger volume of production thereby reducing the unit cost of production for the armed forces. Benefit of any excess generated is also passed on to the armed forces.

Fresh research plan for Defence

3106. SHRI AHMED MOHMEDBHAI PATEL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Chief Controller of Defence Research has stressed upon Government that a fresh research plan should be prepared for defence purpose;

(b) if so, whether it has also been pointed out that utilisation of the country's various academic institutions in research and development of indigenous defence capacity should be reorganised and sufficient funds to be provided for their research and development programme;

(c) if so, what steps Government have proposed to tune up the Received and Distribution Wings in improving the defence capability; and

(d) whether any foreign help and assistance is being sought so that the modern weapons and technology in defence is imported in their research-wing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Cheif Controller Research & Developme'n (A), while speaking at Cmde Garg Memorial Lecture organised by the Institution of Naval Architects was highlighting that Defence Research & Development Organisation was making optimal use of R&D expertise and infrastructure available in universities, academic institutions and research laboratories in the areas of relevance to Defence requirements by sponsoring and funding projects to these institutions. He had stressed that this should continue and be strengthened progressively.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Review of pay scales of draftsmen in MES

3107. DR. BAPU KALDATE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Principal Bench of CAT, New Delhi, in OA case No. 1929